

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 11, 13, 14, 18, 22, 30, 33 and 34, and add new claims 39-61, as shown below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claims 1 - 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (currently amended): A cassette having a hollow for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a frangible tear line.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of frangible tear lines.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

Claim 15 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, further comprising a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 11, further comprising agarose in said hollow.

Claim 18 (currently amended): The cassette of claim 11, further comprising both agarose and a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 16, further comprising filter paper positioned in said hollow to retard egress of molten paraffin.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A method for preparing a tissue sample for analysis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) orienting the tissue sample in the cassette of claim 11;
- (b) embedding an oriented tissue sample in a porous embedding media; and
- (c) directly processing the embedded tissue sample with tissue processing reagents while maintaining the original orientation of the sample without a post-processing paraffin-embedding step.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method of claim 20, wherein the porous embedding media comprises agarose.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The method of claim 20, wherein the ~~process~~ embedded porous embedding media comprises a pre-formed foam.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method of claim 22, wherein the tissue sample is oriented in an opening or depression formed in said pre-formed foam.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, including the step of forming said opening or depression by cutting, drilling, punching or molding.

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, wherein the tissue sample is embedded flush with or below an outer surface of the pre-formed foam.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of claim 23, wherein the pre-formed foam comprises a preformed block of phenolic foam.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of claim 21, wherein said agarose has a melting point in the range of about 55 to 65°C.

Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of claim 20, further including the step of sectioning the embedded tissue sample following processing.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of claim 20, wherein said tissue processing reagents are selected from the group consisting essentially of aqueous formalin, water, xylene, alcohol and paraffin.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A hollow cassette for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion having a perforated bottom wall and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a frangible tear line, the hollow being filled, at least in part, by a porous embedding medium.

Claim 31 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 31, wherein said porous embedding medium comprises agarose and/or a pre-formed foam.

Claim 32 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 30, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

Claim 33 (currently amended): The cassette of claim 30, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of frangible tear lines.

Claim 34 (currently amended): The cassette of claim 30, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

Claim 35 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 30, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

Claim 36 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 31, and further comprising filter paper positioned within the cassette to retard egress of molten paraffin.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 31, wherein the agarose has a melting point in the range of 55 to 65° C.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The cassette of claim 31, wherein the foam comprises a phenolic foam.

Claim 39 (new): A cassette having a hollow for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a tear line, said cassette further comprising a pre-formed foam block and/or agarose in said hollow.

Claim 40 (new): The cassette of claim 39, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

Claim 41 (new): The cassette of claim 39, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of tear lines.

Claim 42 (new): The cassette of claim 39, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

Claim 43 (new): The cassette of claim 39, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

Claim 44 (new): The cassette of claim 39, further comprising both agarose and a pre-formed foam block in said hollow.

Claim 45 (new): The cassette of claim 39, further comprising filter paper positioned in said hollow to retard egress of molten paraffin.

Claim 46 (new): A method for preparing a tissue sample for analysis, comprising the steps of:

- (a) orienting the tissue sample in the cassette of claim 39;
- (b) embedding an oriented tissue sample in a porous embedding media; and
- (c) directly processing the embedded tissue sample with tissue processing reagents while maintaining the original orientation of the sample without a post-processing paraffin-embedding step.

Claim 47 (new): The method of claim 46, wherein the tissue sample is oriented in an opening or depression formed in said pre-formed foam.

Claim 48 (new): The method of claim 46, including the step of forming said opening or depression by cutting, drilling, punching or molding.

Claim 49 (new): The method of claim 47, wherein the tissue sample is embedded flush with or below an outer surface of the pre-formed foam.

Claim 50 (new): The method of claim 47, wherein the pre-formed foam comprises a preformed block of phenolic foam.

Claim 51 (new): The method of claim 46, wherein said agarose has a melting point in the range of about 55 to 65°C.

Claim 52 (new): The method of claim 46, further including the step of sectioning the embedded tissue sample following processing.

Claim 53 (new): The method of claim 46, wherein said tissue processing reagents are selected from the group consisting essentially of aqueous formalin, water, xylene, alcohol and paraffin.

Claim 54 (new): A hollow cassette for receiving and retaining a tissue specimen for fluid treatment preparatory to histological examination, comprising a top portion and a bottom portion snap or friction mounted to the top portion, the bottom portion having a side wall removable along a tear line, the hollow being filled, at least in part, by a porous embedding medium, which comprises agarose and/or a pre-formed foam.

Claim 55 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein said removable side wall bridges said top and bottom portions.

Claim 56 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein said removable side wall includes a pair of tear lines.

Claim 57 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein said removable side wall includes a projecting tab to facilitate removal of said side wall.

Claim 58 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein said top and bottom portions are molded of a synthetic plastic material.

Claim 59 (new): The cassette of claim 54, and further comprising filter paper positioned within the cassette to retard egress of molten paraffin.

Claim 60 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein the agarose has a melting point in the range of 55 to 65° C.

Claim 61 (new): The cassette of claim 54, wherein the foam comprises a phenolic foam.

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement drawings include amendments to FIGS. 5-8. A marked copy of amended FIGS. 5-8 is also enclosed.

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